BRIEF HISTORY

WALDECK UNITED CHURCH

1907–1974

HISTORY OF WALDECK UNITED CHURCH

Down in a valley South of the Swift Current Creek and East of the City of Swift Current, sits the little community of Waldeck. On a summer Sunday morning you may be surprised to hear the nostalgic chiming of a C.P.R. steam engine bell welcoming the Waldeck United Church congregation to worship. This bell was erected on the Church in 1963, when the steam engines were taken out of use. Mr. Graham Scott, Student Minister and Mr. L. Wolkowskie, C.P.R. Station Agent, ~~was~~ were instrumental in acquiring the bell as a memorial of the pioneer coming to the West via C.P.R. and the visit of His Royal Highness King George VI's tour of Canada in 1939. The Royal Train spent one night of that tour in the Village of Waldeck.

The original Waldeck Methodist Church was built in May and June of 1907 at the approximate cost of Three Hundred and Fifty Dollars ($350.00). It was situated on lots donated by Mr. Abrahams, owner of the town site on the South side of the C.P.R. Railway. All labor was volunteer with the exeption of Mr. Kerns, head carpenter, whose salary amounted to Forty Five Dollars and Twenty Five Cents ($45.25). The Church was opened and dedicated on June 23, 1907 by Rev. T.C. Buchanan, Superintendent of Missions for Alberta. Rev. A.A. Lytle of Wesley College, Winnipeg, was the first Minister, a student at that time.

The first officially appointed Stewards were as follows:

Waldeck - Mr. Bright, Mr. Kerns, Dr. Palmer

Cutbank Creek - Mr. A. Ward

Peel - Mr. Peel, Mr. Wallace.

To the Trustees Board the following were elected:

Mr. O.A. Johnson, Mr. C. Kerns, Mr. J.J. Lewis,

Mr. W.J. Campbell and Dr. S.M. Palmer.

At this appointment meeting Rev. A.C. Farrell, Rev. R.W. Dagleish of Swift Current, A.A. Lytle, Mr. Kerns, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lenzie and Dr. Palmer were in attendance.

From January 1908 to June of 1909 the little Church was rented to the School Board for Ten Dollars ($10.00) a month. In 1909 the first school was built and the Church was once again on its own.

After much discussion and thought, the Church was moved to the new town site on the North side of the Railway. At this time the Church congregation had grown due to the influx of many homesteaders. It was decided to enlarge the sanctuary using one-half of the original Church as the pulpit area and the other as the entry. This is the way the Church stands today. The lots, where the Church now stands, were donated by Mr. Peters. At the completion the church was re-dedicated on October 10, 1911 with Rev. A.A. Lytle as guest speaker.

Up to now no mention has been made of the women in the Waldeck community, but it is well known that the Ladies Aid did just that. They played a large part in the financing and decorating of the Church. Teas, suppers and programs were held throughout the years. The members of the original Ladies Aid were:

Mrs. O.A. Johnson, Mrs. P.S. Sperling, Mrs. L.J. Larson,

Mrs. A. Lindstrom, Mrs. S.M. Palmer, Mrs. W. Dunn, Mrs. T. Greive, Mrs. G. Oulton, Mrs. P, Koslowsky, Mrs. G. Grayson and Mrs. W.J. Campbell.

The Methodist Church carried on until the Church Union in 1925, From then on the Church was known as the Waldeck United Church.

During the drought years the Church carried on with hard work and perseverance on the part of its members. They were able to have an ordained or resident Minister until 1940. From then on, only summer services were held with a Student Minister from May to September.

Tuxus Boys and C.G.I.T. groups were carried on as well as Sunday School every Sunday. A Young People's Group was also organized and presented many programs for the young and old. Fowl suppers, teas, bazaars, bake sales, festivals and programs were produced to raise money.

In 1970 the Waldeck United Church was closed. However, with the persistence of the few members, the Church was again re-opened for the summer months in 1971. This is indeed commendable for a little Village Church with so few members.

The Waldeck United Church carries on the work of the pioneers of 1907. The United Church Women still carry on with teas, bazaars, bake sales, strawberry socials and suppers. Their membership is unique in the fact the members

are made up of Anglican, Mennonite Brethren and United Churches, all striving to keep one community church living.

As the welcoming chimes of the church bell echo throughout the Village, nostalgic memories bring back many happy moments of the pioneers and childhood of days gone by.

The 1974 Church board are as follows, -

Mr. R. Buist Mr. C. Veer
Mr. J. Wiebe Mr. A. Philp